

Utah Newborn Safe Haven

News Release

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Utah Newborn Safe Haven Offers 24-Hour Access *Launches New Web Site and Telephone Hotline*

(Salt Lake City, UT) – Throughout the state, newborns have been saved thanks to Utah's Safe Relinquishment of Infants law. And now, new resources in Utah can help save the lives of even more newborns that are not wanted by their birth parents. A 24-hour hotline (1-866-694-2229) and Web site (www.utahsafehaven.org) explain Utah's Safe Relinquishment law and provide other resources to women who hide their pregnancy and are considering abandoning their newborn.

"These new resources help women in crisis make informed choices about an unwanted pregnancy," says sponsor of the Safe Relinquishment of Infants law Senator Patrice Arent. "Our goal is to protect the safety of newborns by raising awareness that infants can be taken to any hospital with no questions asked."

In May 2001, a state-wide law went into effect in Utah that allows a birth parent to give up custody of their newborn child without facing any legal consequences. A newborn may be turned over to hospital staff anonymously, no questions asked. According to Senator Arent, relinquishment should only be considered when other options such as keeping the baby and a traditional adoption have been ruled out.

Passing the Safe Relinquishment legislation was the first step in protecting unwanted newborns, a trend that began with an Alabama news reporter tired of covering stories of abandoned babies. Even here in Utah law enforcement officials have investigated cases that include newborns left in a dresser drawer, a bathroom and a miniature golf course.

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Public awareness is essential. The Utah Newborn Safe Haven Committee is working to provide outreach and inform Utah residents of the Safe Relinquishment law and resources available. Adding to the toll-free information hotline and Web site, are educational posters and handouts.

In addition to providing facts about Utah's Safe Relinquishment law, the toll-free number assists women in a crisis situation with detailed information. Valuable information is available to assist with adoption, location of shelters, pregnancy resources and hospitals.

The toll-free hotline (1-866-694-2229) is a service provided by the National Newborn Lifeline Network. The hotline is serviced 24 hours a day 7 days a week. In addition, information on Utah's Safe Relinquishment Law, commonly asked questions, Utah hospital locations and helpful links and resources can be found at the Utah Newborn Safe Haven Web site at www.utahsafehaven.org

For more information on the Utah Newborn Safe Haven Committee, e-mail: safehaven@utah.gov.

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